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B.M.&G. Solo and Orchestra.

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No. 19. APRIL, MAY 1937.

NEWS AND VIEWS.

BY EMILE GRIMSHAW.

This month I have a very special item of news that will be welcomed by every player of a banjo, mandolin or guitar. This is the publication of a selection of all the most popular tunes from "Show Boat," including "Make Believe," "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," "You are Love," "Why do I Love You?", and of course, "Ol' Man River."

Every soloist, every B.M. and G. Band player must have a keen desire to play tunes that he and everybody else knows: the immensely successful songs of the day. But it is not easy. The owners of the copyrights in these songs, think nothing of printing an issue of 50,000 copies. Compared with this figure, the number that could be printed for fretted-instrument players would be (to them) merely negligible.

I have on many occasions arranged and published for fretted instruments, medleys of popular tunes that I felt sure the majority of players would appreciate: "Community Medley"; "Operatic Memories"; "Scotch Broth"; "Vodka"; "Sousa Scrap Book"; "Medley of Leslie Stuart's Songs," and others. "Show Boat," however, is the best of all. I venture to say that this selection of songs by that great American composer, Jerome Kern, is the finest and most important arrangement that has ever been issued for our instruments. Read the advertisement on the back page of this issue of "Pickings," then write at once for your copy.

I spent a very pleasant evening recently, at a special gathering of the North London B.M. and G. Club members and their friends at the Manor House, Finsbury Park.

Mario de Pietro, who sat next to me at dinner, told me that commencing with this coming June, he would, as in previous years, be playing with a concert party at Shanklin, I.O.W., until September. We talked about B.M. and G. Bands for a time. He said that when in Liverpool some little time ago, he had been

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greatly impressed by a band directed by Mr. Harry Yould in that city. The balance, the rendition and the executive ability of the players were, according to Pietro, everything that could possibly be desired. I was interested to hear this, because I know Mr. Yould very well personally. He is a thoroughly capable musician, and an excellent teacher.

After dinner, an informal concert was given by the North London B.M. and G. Band under the direction of Mr. Harry Davis; the items being "Man the Guns"; "The Kilties"; "Return of the Regiment"; and "Scotch Broth." Mr. Leslie Marsh, winner of the Southern Federation Cup, played "Deep Harmony"; Messrs. E. J. Parnes and F. Lucas played a zither-banjo duet, "Minstrel Man," and a quartet of mandolinists, Messrs. Tyrrell, Lord, Thurlow and Lee, gave a really fine rendition of a number that was new to me.

Readers who have enjoyed that well-known broadcasting feature, "The Rocky Mountaineers," may now have an opportunity of seeing this popular "turn" at their local theatre. After opening at the Empire, Leeds, on March 1st, "The Rocky Mountaineers" appeared for a week at the Wolverhampton Empire, followed by weeks at the Empire, Stratford, and the Opera House, Leicester. The act has a Canadian lumber camp setting, and Bill Herbert, who with his "REVELATION" guitar has appeared in all the B.B.C. broadcasts, is continuing with this fine production while it is on tour.

The Kodak Co. promoted a competition amongst their large staff of employees at Wealdstone on March 12, and awarded prizes to those who possessed entertaining ability. In the musical section the first prize was won by Mr. J. Godwin, banjoist, who competed against many players of the piano-accordion, piano violin and other musical instruments. Mr. Godwin is a pupil of Mr. Wm. Bignell, of Croxley Green, Watford, who in addition to being a busy teacher of the banjo and guitar, is a prominent member of the well-known Medvedeff's Balalaika Orchestra.

SHOW BOAT

"OL' MAN RIVER"
and all the other
BIG SONG HITS
now ready for
Banjo, Mandolin & Guitar

The prize of 12 COMPLETE SOLOS offered in the last issue of "Pickings" to the player who suggested the best name for the new zither-banjo has been awarded to:—
Mr. S. Waddicar, 26 Birley Street, Bury.

B.M. AND G. AT LEIGH-ON-SEA.

On Saturday, March 13th, in the Council Chamber, Leigh-on-Sea, players of fretted-instruments competed for medals and diplomas.

This is the fifth consecutive year in which competitions for banjo, mandolin and guitar playing have been included in the syllabus of the Leigh-on-Sea Musical Festival, and each succeeding year has shown a steadily increasing interest in these special contests. The writer, who was present at the first of these contests as well as the last, can vouch for the fact that the standard of both solo and combination playing is definitely much higher than it was when the competitions were first inaugurated.

Much of the success of these contests is due to the enthusiasm of Mr. S. F. Waddington, who is an immensely popular and efficient teacher of fretted-instruments in this town. Hundreds of Musical Festivals are held annually throughout the country, and with but one or two exceptions, classes for fretted-instruments have never yet been included. Players, teachers and secretaries of B.M.G. Clubs

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"South Sea Islands." (*Waltz.*)
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"Old Remembrance." (*Waltz.*)
"Dance of the Fireflies."
"Isles of Beauty."
"The Gay Gondoliers." (*March.*)
"Peerless Hawaiian March."
"Pacific Paradise."
"Castillion Serenade."
"Hawaiian Sunshine." (*Waltz.*)

For PLECTRUM GUITAR

"Island Echoes March."
"Marvel March."
"Among The Roses." (*Waltz.*)
"One, Two, Three, Four."
"Prairie Medley."
"Paradise Bay." (*Waltz.*)
"Lucky Break." (*By Wm. Morris.*)
"Fascination Glide."
"Spring Blossoms."

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should make some effort to alter this. There must be many Musical Festival committees who would welcome the suggestion.

* * *

MR. H. SPENCER

Seen above playing his E.G. "GRAND," teaches the banjo and mandolin in Burnley and district. Mr. Spencer is immensely popular locally; he is a skilful player and his services as teacher and soloist are in ever-increasing demand.

* * *

FEDERATION NEWS.

The Northern and Southern Sections of the Federation are now making arrangements for the forthcoming Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Rallies in October next. The Northern Rally will again be held on a Sunday at the Tower Circus, Blackpool, and in none of the Northern contests with the exception of that for Bands, will there be a set Test-piece for candidates.

It does not seem likely that the Central Hall, Westminster, will ever again be used for a Southern Federation Rally. The Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, has been booked for October next. In addition to being readily accessible from any part of London, the Memorial Hall, which actually consists of several halls under one roof, has every accommodation for the contests, exhibition café and waiting room for competitors.

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A further adjustment for each separate string makes every note in the high positions perfectly true.

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MR. LEW CARLSON

Mr. Lew Carlson is the leading fretted-instrument specialist in Bristol. He is equally "at home" on banjo, guitar (plectrum and Hawaiian styles) and mandolin, and has a big reputation as a variety and concert artist and professional teacher of the instruments.

In the above photograph, Mr. Lew Carlson is seen with his "Hartford" guitar and E.G. "VIVAVOX" Zither-banjo. Of the former he says:—

"I consider the 'Hartford' guitar the finest at the price in the world, and I am doing my utmost to advertise this wonderful instrument."

After trying out his new E.G. "VIVAVOX" Zither-banjo at the Globe and Empire Theatres, he wrote:—

"I have been seeking a suitable and reliable banjo for the past six years, and am now convinced that my search is ended. This new Zither-banjo is proving itself to be the finest banjo I have ever handled, and is greatly admired by all who have seen and heard it."

* * *

HOW TO PLAY A SOLO EFFECTIVELY.

Those players who decide to enter **Federation** contests, and others who are eager to obtain the best results from any piece they play, will be interested to know what an adjudicator has in his mind when awarding marks.

First of all, he will probably listen very carefully to the tuning. It is surprising how very many fretted-instrument players there are who cannot tune properly. The tuning of any fretted-instrument is not an easy matter. It is

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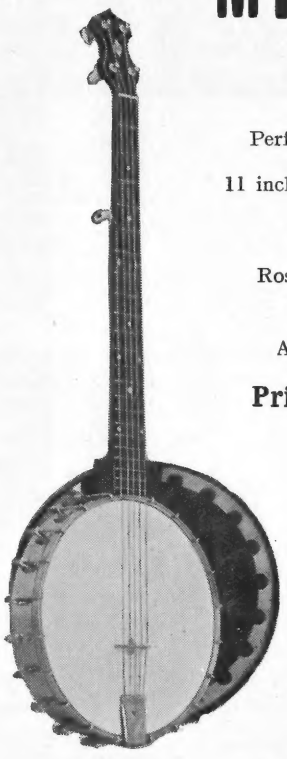
E.G. "MINOR" BANJO



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not sufficient to tune the open strings to the correct pitch. The banjoist or guitarist who has a keen sense of musical intonation will, after tuning the open strings, play a few chords in position in the key of the solo he is about to play and then adjust or temper the slightly faulty tuning he will probably notice.

An adjudicator will award marks for Expression and Tone. The first means much more than a mere correct interpretation of the *p*, *f*, *rit.*, *cresc.* and other musical abbreviations; it means making an instrument say something that is real so that others are impressed. Good Tone is full and pleasing. It is produced from a good instrument with good strings that are properly vibrated.

Marks are awarded for Executive Ability and Accuracy, both being achieved by intelligent and painstaking practice. It is just as well to mention here that being accurate at home when a solo is played is a very different thing from being accurate during a public performance. It is easier to concentrate when alone than it is when in a crowd. Because of this, inexperienced players should lose no opportunity of playing to others. They should take the instrument from its case, show it to relations, to friends. Play them "Ol' Man River" from "Show Boat" or any other favourite tune. This is how players gain experience and gradually acquire confidence to play to a big public audience.

Another important essential of good playing is Interpretation. Half-a-dozen candidates in a musical competition might (and probably will) interpret a solo in half-a-dozen different ways. They may play the right notes with faultless execution, but the interpretation might be incorrect. Each player is expressing his own ideas instead of those of the composer.

Having dealt as concisely as possible with these attributes of good playing, the writer hopes that he has been of some little assistance in enabling players to produce maximum results from the pieces they play, either in contests or at concerts.

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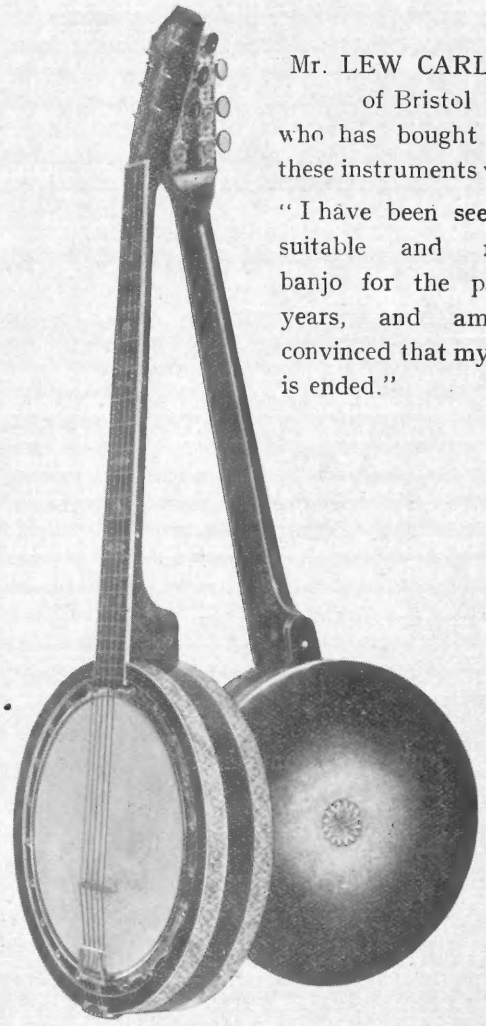

Mr. LEW CARLSON, of Bristol who has bought one of these instruments writes "I have been seeking a suitable and reliable banjo for the past six years, and am now convinced that my search is ended."

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QUERIES ANSWERED.

Fretted-Instrument queries are requested and answered by return post if a stamped, addresssed envelope is enclosed. We give below a selection of the replies that have been sent to correspondents since "Pickings" was last issued, believing that they will be of interest to other players.

A. H. When improvising harmony on your guitar to a song melody, it is only your musical sense of what is correct that can help you. Half-a-dozen arrangers who were each given the same melody to harmonise would probably do this in half-a-dozen different ways according to their individual liking for orthodox or modern harmony, or the extent of their musical knowledge. If your intention is to play the guitar with other players, your harmony would have to be as originally written by the composer. In this case, you should be guided by the piano part: either studying the written notes or listening to what is played on that instrument.

H. M. You ask whether it is possible to play successfully both finger and plectrum styles on one guitar.

The answer to this question depends on whether you intend to play solely for your own amusement or whether you intend your plectrum playing to be a commercial proposition. If the latter, you will require a modern plectrum guitar strung with the customary heavy steel strings, which of course, on the other hand, is quite the wrong method for finger playing. If you play solely for your own pleasure and possibly that of your friends, you are advised to string your guitar with finger-style strings: gut and silk-centred.

J. M. We agree with you that there is a great scarcity of plectrum-banjo solos that are sufficiently easy for a beginner like yourself. No pupil wants to continue with uninteresting exercises until the time arrives when he can attempt to play any one of the plectrum-banjo solos to be found in a publisher's list, even if marked "A" grade or Easy. Of all the solos we know that have been published for a plectrum-played banjo the easiest is "Pick Me Up" and another is "Banjoliers." Both these solos were specially written with a view to their being as effective as possible and at the same time as easy as possible, so that they could be readily played by beginners. Hundreds of copies of these two solos, "Pick Me Up" and "Banjoliers," have been bought by teachers for the use of their inexperienced pupils.

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